(v) Government of India introduced a Margin Money Scheme with a view to supplementing the efforts of the State Governments in reducing the incidence of sickness in the small scale sector. Under the liberalised scheme the maximum amount of assistance per unit available to sick small scale units for rehabilitation has been increased from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 50,000/-.

(vi) An Excise Relief Scheme for weak units has also been announced. The scheme would apply to any unit in which 50 per cent or more of the maximum net worth in any of the previous five accounting years has been eroded by accumulated losses. The unit should have a rehabilitation, modernisation or diversification package approved by a designated financial institution. The eligible unit would be entitled to an interest free loan, with a grace period of 3 years and repayable over seven years, amounting to 50 per cent of its actual excise payments for three years subsequent to the approval of the scheme. The total amount given by way of such 'excise loans' will not exceed 25 per cent of the overall cost of rehabilitation/modernisation/diversification.

(vii) A small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has been established in April 1990 to function as an Apex Bank for tiny and small scale industries. The paid up capital of this bank is Rs. 250 crores.

662. [*Transferred to 30th July, 1991.*]

Setting up of a Consumer Protection Fund

663. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a Consumer Protection Fund;

(b) if so, the details of the proposed fund; and

(c) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) The matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Finance.

Eligibility Scheme for inventors to become Entrepreneurs

664. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Science and Technology had worked out a scheme to encourage inventors to become entrepreneurs in the backward regions of the country;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme; and

(c) progress achived in providing employment under the scheme, locationwise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SMT. MARGARET ALVA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Upliftment of Neglected Villages

665. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to uplift existing villages which were neglected so far; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking or propose to take in this matter?